



NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**THREE MEN PLEAD GUILTY IN FEDERAL COURT
ON CONSPIRACY, COCAINE DISTRIBUTION AND MONEY LAUNDERING**

Anchorage, Alaska – United States Attorney Nelson P. Cohen announced that on February 21, 2008, Jose Antonio Diaz, Adolfo Sanchez-Rios, and Luis Manuel Castaneda Robles, citizens of Mexico, pleaded guilty in federal court to charges of conspiracy, cocaine distribution, and money laundering .

Diaz, age 30, Sanchez-Rios, age 37, and Castaneda-Robles, age 31, pleaded guilty to three counts before United States District Court Judge Ralph R. Beistline.

In connection with the guilty plea, lead Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Assistant United States Attorney Stephan A. Collins advised the court that all three defendants were involved in shipping multiple kilograms of cocaine to Alaska in hidden compartments of vehicles and then shipping drug proceeds out of Alaska in hidden compartments in other vehicles. During one shipment alone, in April, 2007, the defendants shipped ten kilograms of cocaine. During the two year long investigation, law enforcement agents seized over \$350,000 in cash that was intended to be shipped out of Alaska as profits derived from selling cocaine.

Judge Beistline scheduled sentencing for dates in May, 2008 for each defendant. The law provides for a total sentence of a mandatory minimum 10 years imprisonment and up to life , a fine of \$4 million, or both. Under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, the actual sentence imposed is based upon the seriousness of the offenses and the criminal history, if any, of the defendant. Each of the defendants is subject to deportation following completion of his term of imprisonment.

Pending sentencing, the court continued the defendants' detention.

The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and Immigration and Customs Enforcement conducted the investigation that led to the prosecution of these defendants.

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